UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/695,853	10/28/2003	Krishna K. Pappu	03-0128 81615	6739

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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2825	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/695,853	PAPPU ET AL.
Office Action Summary	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Suchin Parihar	2825	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
  Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *11 May 2007*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-20* is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-20* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All   b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6)☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1.   A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set

forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this

application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set

forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action

has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on

5/11/2007 has been entered.

2.   Applicant's arguments filed 5/11/2007 have been fully considered but they are

not persuasive. The applicable rejections from the previous office action are

incorporated herein.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set
> forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and
> the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the
> invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.
> Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4.   **Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)** as being unpatentable over

Beausang (5,828,579) in view of Nadeau-Dostie et al. (6,457,161).

5.   With respect to claims 1 and 10, Beausang teaches a method of grouping cells

for scan testing, which includes teaching a computer program/computer program

product (description of CAD & computer system, Col 6, lines 1-42), comprising the steps

of:

receiving as input a representation of an integrated circuit design (database

[netlist] 210 that defines an IC design, acting as input to the system 205 of Figure 1B,

Col 6, lines 53-55);

initializing (i.e. constructing) a corresponding list of cells for each of a plurality of

common signal domains in the integrated circuit design (constructing scan chains [i.e.

lists] being of a common clock domain, Col 4, lines 5-15), each corresponding list of

cells created as an empty list (set of chains that are compatible with a particular clock

domain may start out as empty, as suggested by 320 of Figure 2A);

selecting (i.e. accessing) a cell that belongs to one of the common signal

domains and that is not included in a corresponding list of cells for any of the common

signal domains (accessing segments [i.e. cell] that have not been assigned to a scan

chain [list], Col 26, lines 60-65 & Col 27, lines 1-5); and

inserting the selected cell in the corresponding list of cells for the common signal

domain associated with the signal driver (scan segments inserted into scan chains

wherein scan chains are of a common signal domain, Col 13, lines 55-60 & Col 4, lines

1-15).

Beausang does not specifically teach tracing steps that involve tracing a net

to/from an input port of each cell connected to a signal driver.

However, Nadeau-Dostie et al. teaches a method/computer-tool for representing

a circuit that involves tracing to/from an input port of each cell connected to a signal

driver to identify the cells being connected (Col 7 line 67 to Col 8 line 57, i.e. signal

tracing module).

It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention to incorporate the teachings of Nadeau-Dostie et al. into the method/program

of Beausang because the tracing step as taught by Nadeau-Dostie et al. would provide

for the necessary identification of the scan cells for selection and further insertion into

the lists (i.e. for proper partitioning of scan cells into subgroups) that correspond to a

particular common signal domain of the method/system of Beausang.

6.   With respect to claims 19 and 20, Beausang teaches:

receiving as input a representation of an integrated circuit design (database

[netlist] 210 that defines an IC design and acts as input data to the system 205 of Figure

1B, Col 6, lines 53-55) that includes cells (see clocked cells of Figures 6A-14B) clocked

by a corresponding clock signal driver for one of a plurality of common clock signal

domains (see common signal domains of Figure 9A);

initializing (i.e. constructing) a corresponding list of cells for each of the common

clock signal domains (constructing scan chains [i.e. lists] being of a common clock

domain, Col 4, lines 5-15) by creating each corresponding list of cells as an empty list

(set of chains that are compatible with a particular clock domain may start out as empty,

as suggested by 320 of Figure 2A);

selecting (i.e. accessing) a cell having a clock signal input that is not included in

a corresponding list of cells for any of the common clock signal domains (accessing

segments [i.e. cell] that have not been assigned to a scan chain [list], Col 26, lines 60-

65 & Col 27, lines 1-5);

inserting the selected cell in the corresponding list of cells for the common clock

signal domain associated with the clock signal driver (scan segments inserted into scan

chains wherein scan chains are of a common signal domain, Col 13, lines 55-60 & Col

4, lines 1-15);

Beausang does not specifically teach tracing steps that involve tracing a net

to/from an input port of each cell connected to a signal driver.

However, Nadeau-Dostie teaches: tracing to/from an input port of each cell

connected to a signal driver to identify the cells being connected to a common signal

domain (Col 7 line 67 to Col 8 line 57, i.e. signal tracing module with the ability to trace

signal inputs and identify their respective sources).

In addition, with respect to the recited "an integrated circuit design that includes

cells clocked by a corresponding clock signal driver for one of a plurality of common

clock signal domains", Nadeau-Dostie teaches said integrated circuit design with

common clock signal domains in Figure 7 (figure shows a common clock domain with

drivers 74 and 84).

It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention to incorporate the teachings of Nadeau-Dostie et al. into the method/program

of Beausang because the tracing step as taught by Nadeau-Dostie et al. would provide

for the necessary identification of the scan cells for selection and further insertion into

the lists (i.e. for proper partitioning of scan cells into subgroups) that correspond to a

particular common signal domain of the method/system of Beausang.

7.   With respect to claims 2 and 11, Beausang in view of Nadeau-Dostie et al.

teaches all the elements of claims 1 and 10, from which the respective claims depend,

as described above. Beausang also teaches repeating steps (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g)

until every cell belonging to the common signal domain associated with the signal driver

has been inserted in a corresponding list of cells for the common signal domain,

(accessing all segments [i.e. cells] that have not already been assigned to a scan chain

and partitions the segments by clock domain).

8.   With respect to claims 3 and 12, Beausang in view of Nadeau-Dostie et al.

teaches all the elements of claims 2 and 11 respectively, from which the respective

claims depend, as described above. Beausang also teaches generating as output a

corresponding list of cells for a common signal domain in the integrated circuit design

(generating as output a compiler generated script file which is a complete specification

of the scan configuration, Col 10, lines 50-55, also see the figure in Col 10 indicating

"scan chain 1" and "scan chain 2" and the cells they each contain).

9.   With respect to claims 4 and 13, Beausang in view of Nadeau-Dostie teaches all

the elements of claims 1 and 10 respectively. Beausang teaches: wherein step (e)

includes storing a name of the selected cell in the corresponding list of cells for the

common signal domain associated with the signal driver (during scan chain [i.e. list]

construction, scan element name is included for each element, Col 16, lines 15-20, also

see Col 10, lines 10-15).

10.   With respect to claims 5 and 14, Beausang in view of Nadeau-Dostie teaches all

the elements of claims 1 and 10, from which the respective claims depend, as

discussed above. Beausang also teaches performing steps (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g)

for cells that are flip-flops in a scan chain (flip-flop is an example of a user defined

segment, Col 14, lines 10-15).

11.   With respect to claims 6 and 15, Beausang in view of Nadeau-Dostie teaches all

the elements of claims 5 and 14, from which the claims depend respectively. Beausang

teaches: performing steps (b), (c), (d), (f) and (g) for a common signal domain that is a

scan clock domain (scan chains being of a common clock domain, Col 4, lines 1-15).

12.   With respect to claims 7 and 16, Beausang in view of Nadeau-Dostie teaches all

the elements of claims 6 and 15, from which the claims depend respectively. Beausang

does not teach: performing steps (d), (e), (f) and (g) for a net that is a clock net.

However, Nadeau-Dostie teaches: performing steps (d), (e), (f) and (g) for a net that is a

clock net (tracing backward from the clock input port of the latch to a clock source,

wherein the connection between the clock input port and the clock source is considered

a "clock net", Col 8, lines 1-15).

13.   With respect to claims 8 and 17, Beausang in view of Nadeau-Dostie teaches all

the elements of claims 7 and 16, from which the claims depend respectively. Beausang

does not teach: performing steps (d), (e), (f) and (g) for an input port that is a clock port.

However, Nadeau-Dostie teaches: performing steps (d), (e), (f) and (g) for an input port

that is a clock port (clock input port of a latch, Col 8, lines 10-15).

14.   With respect to claims 9 and 18, Beausang in view of Nadeau-Dostie teaches all

the elements of claims 8 and 17, from which the claims depend respectively. Beausang

does not teach: performing steps (d), (e), (f) and (g) for a signal driver that is a clock

driver. However, Nadeau-Dostie teaches: performing steps (d), (e), (f) and (g) for a

signal driver that is a clock driver (clock buffer 38 driven by a clock phase PH2 [i.e.

driver], Col 4, lines 35-40).

Response to Arguments

15.   Applicant's arguments filed 5/11/2007 have been fully considered but they are

not persuasive. Examiner's response follows below:

16.   Applicant asserts that combination of Beausang and Nadeau-Dostie fails

to arrive at the subject matter of claims 1, 10, 19 and 20. Applicant asserts that

Nadeau-Dostie does not provide a useful improvement to the invention of Beausang.

Examiner disagrees with this assertion.

17.   Examiner points out that Figure 2A of Beausang illustrates, according Col 27

lines 1-15, that segments [i.e. single sequential cells that are clocked] are partitioned

[i.e. seperated or organized or listed out] by clock domain. This means that the

invention of Beausang implies the ability to decipher which cells belong to which clock

domains so that it can partition these cells by common clock domain. Beausang, in

Figure 2A at 315, then implies the ability to determine which scan chains [i.e. groups of

cells or segments] are compatible with a particular clock domain [i.e. have the same

clock source as another cell or cells]. However, Beausang does not explicitly teach a

method or process that can determine whether a cell has a clock domain that is

identical or compatible with another cell or group of cells. This lacking step is taught by

Nadeau-Dostie. Nadeau-Dostie teaches a tracing step wherein a path can be traced

from a clock source to a clock input of a cell to determine its source (see Nadeau-

Dostie, Col 8, lines 5-15) which then can help in determining whether two or more cells

belong to a common signal source (i.e. the clock of the two latches is derived from the

same input clock, Col 1, lines 25-30). This tracing step implies that tracing can be

performed from clock-input to source, or source to clock-input. Therefore, the Examiner

points out the lacking step of Beausang: a tracing step to determine whether two or

more cells have a common signal domain [i.e. a tracing step to determine a specific

domain for a particular cell, and then to determine whether that is the same domain as

another cell or group of cells]. This lacking step is provided by Beausang as described

above. The motivation to combine Beausang and Nodeau-Dostie is as follows:

Nadeau-Dostie improves the invention of Beausang by providing a method to trace

specific clock sources to/from one or more clocked cells in order to determine common

clock domains between on or more clocked cells. It would have been obvious to

combine inventions relating to the determination of common clock domains in scan

chains or groupings of sequential cells, to both of which Beausang and Nadeau-Dostie

relate.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Suchin Parihar whose telephone number is 571-272-

6210. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Jack Chiang can be reached on 571-272-7483. The fax phone number for

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent

Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published

applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status

information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For

more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you

have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business

Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO

Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call

800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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